

REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TOWN OF CANTON,  
FOR THE YEAR 1855-6.

PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY ORDER OF THE TOWN.

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WILLIAM BENSE, PRINTER,  
1856.



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THE importance of our Public Schools, and their bearing and influence upon the vital interests of the people, are being every year more clearly and fully recognized, and, as a consequence, the disposition to sustain and carry them forward to a greater efficiency and usefulness is correspondingly increased. Among the means contributed to produce this cheering result, few, if any, hold a more important place than the Annual Reports required of the Committee to whose care and supervision these Schools are entrusted.

In submitting their present Report, your Committee are deeply sensible of this fact. They feel that there is a higher object in view in laying it before you, than mere conformity to the Statute. The Schools are yours. You have established them, and you adopt measures and provide means for their support. And though you give the general charge and superintendence into the hands of the Committee, and they are responsible for their more immediate management during the year, yet with you, primarily, rests the power on which they depend for whatever of permanent good and usefulness they may possess. That you may exercise this power judiciously, adopt such measures and provide such means as are necessary for the best advancement of their interests, it is important that you should be often informed of their condition, and know what has been done, or is being done by them. Though regarding our Schools as steadily advancing, exerting a wider influence, and accomplishing a larger amount of good each succeeding year, and believing that they have, for the most part, made worthy and gratifying progress during the just completed year, yet it is not to be supposed that any one of them has attained the eminence and the usefulness of which it is capable, or which it is in your power to give it.

It is, therefore, an essential duty devolving upon every voter, and to be seriously heeded, on each returning year, to consider this subject, and seek to understand what action should be taken in their behalf.

We trust that the statement of facts, and the suggestions which it is our duty and privilege to make, will aid you in the fulfilment of this duty, and contribute to strengthen and encourage you in your continued efforts to give the highest character and worth to the Schools of the town.

On entering upon the duties to which it was your pleasure to appoint us, we were obliged to regret the inability of one chosen to be a co-worker with us, Mr. EDWIN R. EAGER, to accept the office.

The entire work of superintending the Schools has, therefore, devolved upon the remaining members, only one of whom brought to the discharge of this arduous and responsible trust, that experience so essential to its best fulfilment. But animated with an earnest interest in the Schools committed to our care, we have endeavored faithfully, and to the best of our ability, to perform the duties assigned to us, with an equal eye to the good of all.

#### DISTRICT No. 1.

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 59.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$244.91.

#### SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, WILLIAM HORTON. Teacher, Miss AUGUSTA W. MULLIKEN. Length of school, 5 months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$28.00; whole number of scholars, 63; average attendance, 40 42-100; number under 5 years of age, 5; number over 15 years of age, 1.

Favored with an excellent and faithful teacher, this school would have accomplished a much better work if the attendance of the children had been more regular and constant. Several were absent for days together, and some even for weeks. Serious interruption was also occasioned by the prevalence of an epidemic in the district. The examination, however, was very good, giving evidence of greater improvement on the part of the scholars generally, than the Committee had reason to expect under the circumstances. The teacher performed her duties to the highest satisfaction of the Committee, fully sustaining the excellent reputation she had previously acquired in another part of the town, of which the reports of the last two years have borne testimony.

**WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss A. W. MULLIKEN, who resigned her charge at the expiration of six weeks, for the purpose of accepting a situation in a distant State. She was succeeded by Miss ELIZABETH S. HUNT. Length of School, four months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$24.75; whole number of scholars, 52; average attendance, 40 5-7; number over 15 years of age, 1.

Scarcely had the school recommenced, after an interruption of two weeks, consequent upon the leaving of Miss Mulliken, when the epidemic which has prevailed quite extensively in the town during the Winter, made its appearance in the district, and took from the school a large number. Those who were able to attend constantly, made good improvement, and the school at its close, considering the disadvantages under which the teacher had labored, appeared well, giving pleasing evidence of her ability.

There is one matter which the inhabitants of this district should seriously consider. Is the present school-house a suitable and comfortable place for their children? Would it not be for their welfare, and that of the school, to have a new and better building provided? We suggest this, and hope that it will be duly considered and lead to a right and needed action.

**DISTRICT No. 2.**

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 53.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$244.91. \_

**SUMMER TERM.**

Prudential Committee, SAMUEL FISHER. Teacher, Miss MARY J. DICKERMAN. Length of school, six months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$28.00; whole number of Scholars, 49; average attendance, 36 1-4; number under 5 years of age, 1; number over 15 years of age, 5.

**WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss M. J. DICKERMAN. Length of school, four months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$29.00; whole number of scholars, 47; average attendance, 38; number over 15 years of age, 11.

The same teacher has been employed in this school during both the Summer and Winter terms. This is as it should be. A good teacher, when obtained for a school, should be retained in it. Of the faithfulness of Miss Dickerman, former Reports have spoken to you. She accomplished a gratifying work in her connection and labors with this school. A truly pleasant state of feeling and interest has existed among the scholars, and they have devoted themselves faithfully and cheerfully to their studies, with the evident consciousness that they, as well as their teacher, had something to do to make their school a good one, and one of true profit to themselves.

### DISTRICT No. 3.

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 270.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$979.64.

#### FIRST PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, RUFUS C. WOOD. Teacher, Miss HELEN M. BEAUMONT. Assistant, Miss MERRIAM E. DEANE. Length of school, five and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$14.00; wages of assistant, per month, including board, \$8.00; whole number of scholars, 110; average attendance, 70; number under 5 years of age, 30.

#### SECOND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Miss MARTHA CLARK. Length of school, five and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$16.00; whole number of scholars, 64; average attendance, 55 1-2.

#### INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Miss SARAH C. MESSINGER. Length of school, five and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$20.00; whole number of scholars, 52; average attendance, 47.

#### GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. HORACE O. WHITTEMORE. Length of school, two and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$45.45 5-11; whole number of scholars, 53; average attendance, 48; number over 15 years of age, 7.

### **GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. FALL TERM.**

Teacher, Mr. R. CECIL BARRETT. Length of school, three months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$45.45 5-11; whole number of scholars, 43; average attendance, 39; number over 15 years of age, 6.

### **FIRST PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss MARY E. RICHMOND. Length of school, three and one half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$14.00; whole number of scholars, 98; average attendance, 66; number under 5 years of age, 24.

### **SECOND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss HELEN M. BEAUMONT. Length of School, three and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$14.00; whole number of scholars, 66; average attendance, 50 56-65.

### **INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss H. F. LEAVITT. Length of school, three and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$16.00; whole number of scholars, 54; average attendance, 42 1-70; number over 15 years of age, 2.

### **GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Mr. R. C. BARRETT. Length of school, three and one-half months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$45.45 5-11; whole number of scholars, 49; average attendance, 37; number over 15 years of age, 6.

The First Primary Department in this district, is quite large, so that during a portion of the Summer term, we found it necessary to employ an assistant. Should there be a like increase in the number of scholars, the ensuing term, that there was at the commencement of the last Summer's term, there will doubtless be occasion for another sub-division, and the establishment of one more school.

Changes of teachers have occurred in this district, which we would gladly have avoided had it been in our power. At the commencement of the Summer term, things were in fine order, and gave promise of a happy and profitable term. Teachers were able, earnest, and truly devoted to their work, and the scholars under their charge were strongly attached to them.

In the First Primary Department, Miss Beaumont continued her labors with gratifying success. Commencing with seventy pupils, the number soon increased to more than a hundred, yet she toiled on for a month without an assistant. She was then relieved in a measure by the employment of Miss Merriam E. Deane.

In the Winter term, Miss Beaumont was transferred to the Second Primary Department, and Miss Mary E. Richmond was appointed to succeed her in this school. Miss Richmond was kind and pleasant in her intercourse with her pupils, and possessed, in an eminent degree, those qualities which win the attention and the affection of children, while her tact for imparting instruction was happy and successful. If these qualifications had been united with, and sustained by a more untiring application, and a wholesome and proper discipline, they would have accomplished a more marked and beneficial result. The classes in Arithmetic and Geography, taught orally, were interesting, and gave evidence of much labor.

The Second Primary Department, under Miss Clark, continued in an excellent condition, with the scholars accomplishing a pleasing progress, till, worn by her toils, and her health otherwise enfeebled, she was under the necessity of relinquishing the position which she had so faithfully and acceptably filled. It was hoped that a respite of a few weeks from the cares and fatigue of the school-room, would enable her to regain her wonted health and strength, and return to her labors. In the mean time, Miss Louisa Clark was appointed to supply her place, and though the circumstances were such as to render her position somewhat difficult, she sustained herself in it with a good degree of success. Under Miss Beaumont, in the Winter term, the character which the school had acquired, was well maintained, and good improvement made.

The Intermediate Department possessed the same high character, and was conducted with the same ability during the Summer term as have heretofore distinguished it under the tuition of Miss Messinger. The examination was truly a model, and would have been creditable to scholars of a maturer age. This was the closing term of Miss Messinger's connection with the school, she having concluded to retire from teaching. It was not without feelings of sorrow that your Committee, together with the friends of the school generally, parted with the services of one who had labored with such diligence and fidelity through a series of years, and by her

talent, industry, and devotion to her duty, given so high and worthy a character to the department under her charge. In appointing a successor, we felt that the place was a difficult one to fill, and would require a tried and experienced teacher. Only such could well hope for success in following one of so distinguished ability and faithfulness. Such an one we believed we had in the teacher who had been employed in the Second Primary Department, whom it was our intention to transfer to this. But continued ill health compelled her to abandon, for the present, the idea of teaching. Accordingly, Miss H. F. Leavitt was proposed, and received the appointment to the place. It was soon evident that her labors were not to be so pleasant or profitable as we could have desired. She seemed not fortunate in securing the respect and obedience of the scholars, and the school declined in interest and in order. A spirit of insubordination was exhibited by many, and this was rather strengthened than otherwise, by various co-operating influences. Another serious obstacle was the frequent interruption of the school by the cold weather. On several occasions the room could not, with the means provided, be made comfortable, and the school was obliged to be dismissed. Having these difficulties to contend with, we felt that the situation of the teacher was an arduous and trying one. But she met it with energy and perseverance, which under ordinary circumstances, and with larger experience, would have been attended with better results.

The Grammar Department has been well maintained. Mr. Whittemore, who was at its head at the commencement of the Summer term, and was doing an excellent work, left quite unexpectedly to your Committee. We regretted to lose him, as he was, in many respects, a superior teacher. Mr. Barrett, who was selected as his successor, has devoted himself to his duties with industry and ability. A very marked improvement has been manifest in the lower classes, while the more advanced have at the same time gone steadily forward, clearly evincing in the thoroughness and accuracy of their recitations, the capability of the teacher. This school suffered serious interruption during the Winter term, from the same cause which we have spoken of as affecting the intermediate department; the impossibility on many of the days of severe cold, of making the room comfortable. It was also somewhat affected by the sickness of many of the scholars.

## DISTRICT No. 4.

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 30.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$183.68.

**SUMMER TERM.**

Prudential Committee, NATHANAEL TUCKER. Teacher, Miss ELIZABETH H. PAGE. Length of school, four and three quarters months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$16.00; whole number of scholars, 27; average attendance, 22; number under 5 years of age, 3.

**WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss E. H. PAGE. Length of school, four and a quarter months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$20.00; whole number of scholars, 23; average attendance, 18.

Good order and devotion to study have characterized this school through the year. The teacher is deeply interested in her work, and the children give good evidence of faithful instruction, in the progress they have made. We were glad to have Miss Page continue in the school through the Winter. She is well adapted to the place, and should be retained in it. The attendance of the friends, at the examination, gave ample evidence of their unabated interest in the school.

## DISTRICT No. 5.

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 59.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$244.91.

**SUMMER TERM.**

Prudential Committee, EBENEZER JOHNSON. Teacher, Miss EMILY A. DICKERMAN. Length of school, five months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$24.00; whole number of scholars, 47; average attendance, 34; number under 5 years of age, 3; number over 15 years of age, 1.

Miss Dickerman was well qualified in the branches required to be taught, and the Committee anticipated a good term for this school. But in this they were disappointed. There was a want of attention, animation and interest in the scholars; and though the teacher appeared earnest and devoted, and ready to adopt any suggestion calculated to benefit those under her instruction, she failed to overcome

this evil, and advance the scholars in their studies. There was manifestly a lack of system, and of true concentrative power, both in the teaching and the discipline.

#### WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Mr. BUSHROD MORSE. Length of school, three months ; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$40.00 ; whole number of scholars, 47 ; average attendance, 31 ; number under 5 years of age, 2 ; number over 15 years of age, 3.

The selection of teacher for this school was again an unfortunate one. It needed a strict disciplinarian, and we hoped that we had secured one in Mr. Morse. But instead of this, he was easy and indulgent, and evidently desirous of getting along with as little labor as possible. His services were of little worth, and at the examination we regretted that they had not been dispensed with at an earlier day. During the term, the school suffered somewhat from the epidemic which prevailed in the town.

#### DISTRICT No. 6.

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 84.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$306.13.

#### SUMMER TERM.

Prudential Committee, OLIVER DEANE. Teacher, Miss SUSAN C. HALL. Length of school, four months ; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$24.00 ; whole number of scholars, 66 ; average attendance, 44 ; number under 5 years of age, 13 ; number over 15 years of age, 1.

This school was much interrupted by the irregular attendance of the scholars. Those who were constant made good progress. The teacher was able and faithful. One of the greatest evils in this district is the detaining children from the school to work in the mill. This should not be allowed. If a scholar connects himself with the school, he should attend steadily through the term, if it is possible for him to do so. If he intends to work in the mill when there is anything there for him to do, and is liable to be wanted there every few days, or a day or two in each week, then he should not become connected with the school, for in so doing he is injuring the school and getting but comparatively little good himself.

**WINTER TERM.**

Teacher, Mr. J. C. MEADE. Length of school, five months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$40.00; whole number of scholars, 66; average attendance, 50 1-10; number over 15 years of age, 3.

We have seldom witnessed a greater change in any school than took place in this under the tuition of Mr. Meade. The reputation formerly acquired by him in the town, as a thoroughly competent and successful teacher, was amply sustained. A remarkable interest even to enthusiasm, was awakened in the pupils, and work was the order of the day. The hitherto dull and unambitious aroused themselves, and exhibited an industry and a devotion to their studies, truly commendable. The improvement in the school was marked, thorough and rapid. The discipline exercised by the teacher, was full of the spirit of kindness, yet firm and efficient, and productive of the happiest results. Recitations were accurate and prompt, and gave evidence of the tact and thoroughness, as well as the untiring zeal of the teacher. The examination was interesting, and afforded great satisfaction and delight to the unusually large number of spectators, many of whom were present from several of the other districts.

**DISTRICT No. 7.**

Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age, 96.

Amount of money appropriated to the District, \$428.58.

“ “ “ contributed by the District, \$121.50.

**PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.**

Prudential Committee, ALBERT W. MAKEPEACE. Teacher, Miss JANE M. IDE. Length of school, five and three quarters months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$24.00; whole number of scholars, 49; average attendance, 39; number under 5 years of age, 2.

**GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. SUMMER TERM.**

Teacher, Miss ANNIE E. IDE. Length of school, five and three quarters months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$28.00; whole number of scholars, 43; average attendance, 37; number over 15 years of age, 2.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss J. M. IDE. Length of school, three and one quarter months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$25.00; whole number of scholars, 39; average attendance, 34.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT. WINTER TERM.

Teacher, Miss A. E. IDE. Length of school, three and one quarter months; wages of teacher, per month, including board, \$29.00; whole number of scholars, 42; average attendance, 38 1-2; number over 15 years of age, 6.

The high commendation bestowed upon these schools, in the Report of last year, they have continued to merit. In the improvement which has been made, our expectations, which were by no means small, have been fully realized. The teaching is of a character deserving notice, possessing less of the mechanical in its method, and more that is addressed to the understanding. The pupils are not only taught certain things, made to perform a given amount of work, but they are instructed in the principles of the subjects studied. In this way study is made attractive and truly profitable, and is attended to with satisfaction and delight.

It gives us pleasure to remark the worthy appreciation of these schools by the inhabitants of the district, of which the generous contribution of \$121.50 for continuing them after the money appropriated by the town had been expended, is a fitting expression.

### SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Whole amount of money raised by the town for schools,	\$2,500 00
Interest of State School Fund,	132 76
Amount of money contributed,	121 50
Total,	<u>\$2,754 26</u>
Average wages paid to Male Teachers per month, including board, for the year,	\$43 63
Average wages paid to Female Teachers, ditto,	\$21 83
Aggregate of wages paid to Teachers per month, in Summer,	\$267 45 5-11
“ “ “ “ “ “ Winter,	\$297 20 5-11
Whole number of children in town between 5 and 15 years of age,	650
“ “ “ “ attending school in Summer,	618
“ “ “ “ “ “ Winter,	583
Average attendance in Summer,	469
“ “ “ “ Winter,	445
Average number of months which the schools were kept,	9
Aggregate “ “ “ “ “ “	99
Number of schools in town,	11

In attending to the duties of their office, your Committee have attempted to initiate no new system or plan of operations, but simply

to carry out as well as circumstances would allow, what was begun by the Committee of the previous year. We have continued the same regulations which they adopted, and the use of the same books which they prescribed, regarding frequent changes in these matters as exceedingly prejudicial to the interests of the schools.

In reviewing the year, we see much to inspire satisfaction, and give fresh encouragement. Children are awakening to a better appreciation of the privileges which they enjoy, and devoting themselves to their studies with increasing diligence; and the schools, though their condition has been, in many respects, very gratifying in the past, are advancing steadily to a higher point of excellence. But there is much yet to be done for them, to make them what we all would like to see them, equal with the best.

And in what we do in their behalf, we need to be guided by such an understanding of the true work of education, as will induce an efficient and complete adaptation of means to ends. It is not so much the amount gathered into the mind, as it is the training which it receives, and the moral and mental effect of the influences which are brought to bear upon it, that constitute the real work of the school-room. The character of these influences, and the method of instruction, are, therefore, of the utmost importance. Children should be so led along as to enjoy study, and always feel a deep and ever-increasing interest in their lessons.

We have been pained to know of instances of severe corporal punishment in some of the schools. This we do not approve, except in cases of aggravated misconduct, and then only as a last resort, when other means have failed to effect the desired result. In order to be beneficial, the discipline exercised should always be such as will reach and affect the moral powers. It is a fact worthy of notice, that those teachers who stand the highest, and have the best success, are seldom known to use severe measures. The kind and gentle, though firm and decided manner, a countenance beaming with pleasantness, and a voice mellow, winning and affectionate, are a mightier power than physical force, and can prevail with even the most wayward. The true point in the government of the school-room, does not so much consist in the correction of a wrong by an appropriate punishment, as in preventing the wrong by bringing into action and cultivating the better feelings and virtues of the heart

love, kindness, truthfulness and self respect, through the exhibition of these virtues in the teacher.

A serious hindrance to the prosperity of some of the schools during the year past, has resulted from the insufficiency of the appropriation made by the town to meet their actual needs. It was hoped that this evil would be remedied the present year by a larger appropriation, as it is one which affects somewhat several of the districts. We feel that if the true state of things had been well understood by the inhabitants of the town generally, this would have been done. We have now two more schools to be supported than we had when the annual appropriation was first fixed at its present amount, thus incurring additional expense for teachers. Besides this, the increased rates of living render it essential in many instances, that the wages of the teachers should be increased. The result is, that the number of months in which the schools, in some of the districts, are able to be kept with the means provided, is materially lessened. Ought this to be so? Are there any of the schools that can be thus restricted without operating injuriously to their interests? If you have good teachers employed, you can hardly expect to retain them if they are obliged to waste three months in the year. They will be likely to leave for other places where they can have employment a greater number of months. By the last Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, we learn that Canton stands No. 117 in the State, in the comparative amount of money appropriated for the education of each child between five and fifteen years of age, and No. 15 in the County. In the percentage of taxable property appropriated to the support of Public Schools, we stand No. 194 in the State, and No. 19 in the County. We pay only 1 80-100 per cent. of our property for the maintenance of our schools. In the average attendance of the children upon the schools, we stand No. 229 in the State, and No. 20 in the County — only three below us in the County, in this matter. These are facts which we ought to know, and knowing them, let us look to our interests and our credit.

There is another matter to which we will only briefly allude, and which, whatever may be the method of school supervision adopted by you in the future, we regard as of great importance. It is that of permanency in the Board of Superintending Committee. Frequent, and especially entire changes in this Board, are exceedingly

prejudicial to the welfare of the schools, as must be evident to every one who will candidly reflect upon it. It prevents the adoption and successfully carrying out of any fixed and complete system, and tends to retard the progress of the schools. The benefit of experience, which is so essential in the performance of any and every duty, is not realized, and each year becomes but a repetition, for the most part, of the preceding. So far as the true interests of the schools are concerned, such a state of things is a great and ruinous evil, let the occasion of it be what it may. We ought not to expect any marked and permanent gain to the interests of education in the town, if this office is to be uncertain and fluctuating in its character, subject to the ebb and flow of party feeling or sectional jealousy, and new incumbents are each year to succeed those of a former year. The remarks of the Secretary of the Board of Education, in his Report of last year, upon this point, are worthy of attention. He says, "it is like breaking the chain of electric influence just after leaving the battery. The power of effecting great good is surrendered at the very moment when it is at its maximum. If the Committee could be divided into two or three portions, each of which should be successively chosen for a longer period than one year, there would be an overlapping of one part upon the other, which would give continuity, and supply the means of transmitting from year to year whatever of excellence has been once introduced."

Asking your serious and candid consideration of these several matters, and invoking the Divine blessing upon all the efforts which you may put forth for the improvement of the rising generation among us,

The Report is respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH CREHORE,  
SOLOMON CLARK.



